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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the future by focusing attention upon a few critical areas. Some specific research is cited to support the major thesis that faculty and staff do not influence students in affective areas. The hypothesis that colleges can fulfill their stated objectives only by taking advantage of affective opportunities and by overtly influencing the values of students, a hitherto heretical position from the student personnel point of view, is developed. That we must continuously avail ourselves of "teaching moments" to reach students and to have a positive impact upon their values to counter the negative impact of today's "value-less" college student society is considered. That the future of student services will witness its demise is postulated. The current perception of the profession is confronted by the notion that changed working relations will necessitate the abolition of long-term careers and the introduction of caretaker administrators who are ad-hoc generalists as replacements. The final major hypothesis holds that personnel within the field can do nothing to alter the negative impacts of reorganization, reallocation of resources, collective bargaining and harsh budget realities. (Author)

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THE CRYSTAL BALL EXAMINED: A VIEW OF THE FUTURE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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In Locksley Hall Tennyson wrote, "For I dipped into the future as far as human eye could see, saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be."

I dip into the future as far as my eyes can see. I see the vision of the world of student affairs. But, I see no "wonder that would be." I see a disturbing vision. I see a vision more consistent with Gore Vidal's line than with Tennyson's verse. In his novel, 1876, Vidal wrote, "Never brood upon the past...think always of the future, and how much worse it is bound to be." This negative perception is the future of the world in student affairs according to my crystal ball. The view is negative, if not in an absolute sense, certainly in a relative one. The future is not bright in relation to the events of the past and present. We have been on an elevator which has been rising rapidly. That elevator is slowing down; it may even be stopping. We have not the power to prevent it. Of that I am certain. We may have the power only to prevent its rapid descent. The elevator is an analogy of the perception which the total community holds for higher education, in general, and it is the basis by which it prioritizes student services, in particular.

You will recall that Albert Einstein said, "I never think of the future; it comes soon enough." Most people subscribe to that philosophy. I do not. I think of the future and as I scan the crystal ball I notice some upsetting sights. I suggest that what I see in my crystal ball today is already becomming harsh reality. I suggest that what I see in my crystal ball is what we each already know but would rather forget.

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We call ourselves change agents. But, have we changed students very much? Have we changed them at all? We remember that Feldman and Newcomb in their book, The Impact of Colleges on Students found that faculty members are not responsible for any significant changes that take place in students. The results of Astin's studies, reported in the "Educational Record", found that students living in residence halls showed increases in smoking and drinking and decreases in church attendance and class attendance. We will also recall more current research by Yankelovich which showed greater similarities developing between college youth and non-college youth. So we don't change students very much, affectively, particularly if they are not already open to change. And we certainly do not change them enough in relation to the time, the money, and the energy which we invest in the cause. But should we? Or should we be permissive in student affairs and let them "do their own thing"? What really is our role? How is it related to the mission of the institution?

Most college catalogues in publishing the philosophy and objectives of the institution state something like this, "Education at the college level should develop personal responsibility and should instill a sense of responsibility to society." What better place can there be to instill this responsibility to self and to society than in a student affairs domain? There can be no better place! In the future world of student affairs this objective will be a major one. Colleges will look to us to develop the affective area in a way that it is not being developed today. In the future we will take advantage of the many opportunities to have that critical affective impact on our students. We will take advantage of the many teachable moments to reach our students. We will bring about change as it is not being brought about today. Even Henry Steele Commager agrees with me. Writing in the CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION last summer he indicated that colleges of small and average size will need to meet a

responsibility for the moral and ethical values of students. How familiar that is to those of us who attended college in the 50's, who attended compulsory chapel, who were constantly imbued with moral and spiritual values as part of what was regarded as the total development of a well-educated individual. The pendulum is swinging back to that notion. There will be a re-examination of and a re-emphasis upon the affective role. There will be a deepening sensitivity to the "teachable moments" concept. In the future our jobs will require a significant influence with students in the affective area. It will not be simple; but, it is related to the very essence of the purposes of education.

What is the purpose of education? The purposes are many and varied but on one most educational philosophers agree. It is the purpose of education to create a stable society by transmitting the values and cultures of one generation to another. I strongly support that view. I support it because it is my assumption that educators are well-adjusted and mature individuals. I support it because educators are quite capable of transmitting values and cultures to the less mature and the less well-adjusted. I support it because I believe even students want a stable society. But I have apprehensions!! Are we really transmitting our values and cultures? Who is influencing whom? Who is transmitting what to whom? Are educators transmitting to students or students to educators? Articles by Richardson and Pierce in the Fall '75 issue of the NASPA JOURNAL raise a shocking fact. We as student affairs educators are absorbing more values from students that we are imparting to them!!! Evidence abounds all around us to support that fact. Society doesn't pay students to change our values. But they certainly do! In the future we will reverse that trend. If we are to have an impact on the affective domain, if we are to influence the less mature and the less well-adjusted we must reverse that trend. To help students cope with the many problems which

they will face we had better lead rather than be led and we had better begin soon. We can if we bestow TOUGH LOVE in abundance! We can if we hold students to the painful decisions they must make and not succumb to the path of least resistance. Even, God forbid, by reflecting our value systems this demonstration of TOUGH LOVE will end our practice of changing the environment for the student and will result in adjusting the student to the existing environment. We should reflect our personal values. If they are prized they ought to be publicly proclaimed and used to influence students. God knows such influence is needed.

1. Is there any campus which has not mourned the loss of the Protestant ethic?
2. Is there any campus which has not witnessed the erosion of integrity?
3. Is there any campus which has not witnessed lower academic standards and achievements?
4. Is there any campus which has not experienced more assaults, more thefts, and more cheating than two decades ago?

I doubt such campuses exist. The situations must change. My crystal ball shows it can change. But, it will take a massive affective impact by all of us to bring it about. My money says we will not.

When I look into my crystal ball I see only one way in which we will successfully have that affective impact upon students. Only one way in which we will influence their moral and ethical values. Only one way in which we will instill in them a personal responsibility to each other and to society. It is the unglamorous, often tedious, always time-consuming delivery of services to those students who face us

everyday in our offices. There is no other way to reach them to capitalize on the teachable moments. In the future we will continue to serve students in many of the same ways. We will help them help themselves to cope with their problems; not by dreaming up some glamorous innovative projects, but rather by conscientiously carrying out our often thankless day-to-day office routines. This service will require commitment and dedication on our part. Don't underestimate that calling because even in the future we can make a difference in the lives of students if we really want to. But it will not be simple. If we think we have troubles now we need to wait a few years.

Yes, it will be difficult to make that difference. It will be difficult to have that wholesome impact because there will be fewer of us. Our numbers will decrease, perhaps not dramatically, but, certainly our numbers will decrease in greater proportion than will the need for our developmental services. As we are now, so in the future, we will be called upon to do more and more with less and less, to work harder with less staff, less equipment and supplies, less external appreciation and less internal satisfaction. That is a certainty on which my crystal ball does not equivocate.

But, don't despair! This new operational framework of the future can still be effective. It will be effective, if and only if, we can concentrate on doing the greatest good for the greatest number. We must give up the luxury of the one-to-one relationships which bring us the greatest psychic income. We can still be effective if we accept a change in our status. That change will be shocking! We will be turned from professional-specialists to non-professional generalists. So, let's not be threatened psychologically by that change. (While we may have a negative reaction

to this I suppose we should be thankful that students will have problems and that some positions will be necessary, changed though they may be, to assist with those problems.) Therefore, our personal need for service can still be satisfied regardless of what titles we are given. Dealing with problems in years to come will change us from student affairs professionals operating within a mode of change agentry and student advocacy and will turn us to being ad hoc administrators. Change agents and student advocates will be low in priority. Generalist administrators will be high. We will be administrators with a responsibility to maintain the stability of the organization. We will be administrators who will have a caretaker function. We will be administrators who will be flying a holding pattern at best rather than a pattern of moving forward. This change will jolt us but it will affect our ego more than our performance, fortunately.

Thus, there will be no specialized profession in student personnel work in the future. Like other segments of society we are overeducated and underemployed. Proving that our field is a profession has been a battle many of us have been waging for some time. We are losing the battle. The future will show that without question we will have lost it. So, we will not be professionals. The attitude of students, court decisions and legislation are some reasons. Our lack of those characteristics which Leiberman claims society generally associates with a profession is another reason. This transformation will hurt our self-concept more than our performance though our field will change. There is no question about that.

Our field will be characterized by a number of varied ad hoc generalist-type positions which will not be of a career nature. The fewer lifetime careers in the area of student affairs will be off-set by greater use of students, paraprofessionals and entry-level generalists who will find it a challenging stepping stone for other

related endeavors. In fact, there will be very few long-term careers in the field at any particular area. Changing needs, public reaction, legislative priorities, inefficient production, budget realities, reorganization and reallocation of resources, and wide-spread collective bargaining will influence our field from without to a greater degree than will our own influence from within. We will respond more to the pressure from the outside than to suggest cures from the inside.

Why is this so? Why can we not exercise a greater influence upon our own destiny? Why can we not help ourselves from within? The simple fact is----we are dealing with immeasurable entities. Our student affairs goals and objectives cannot be scientifically quantified. They can never be satisfactorily evaluated. We can never provide irrefutable data which can be universally accepted. Yet, to satisfy society we must know the outcomes of our work. We must be in a position to scientifically measure those outcomes. How do we measure personal self-development? How do we measure a degree of responsibility to society? How do we measure our affective impact? How do we measure values and attitudes and perceptions and interests? How do we measure the various and important intrinsic qualities which we are striving to inculcate? How do we prove that conclusions drawn are directly correlated with our time and energy invested? How? We cannot! President Bloustein of Rutgers University wrote that, "anyone who perceives to measure educational outcomes as if they were like outcomes from manufacturing or production is making a fundamental error. The tragedy of requiring measurable outcomes for higher education is that most of its important goals are immeasurable while lesser and unimportant goals will be established simply because they are measurable." That's the profound perception of our future! That's a reality which cannot be denied! That's the root of our difficulty in reaching our various constituencies according to my crystal ball! To paraphrase Emerson, we cannot prove we have built a better mousetrap. So, how can we expect "the world to beat a path to our door"?